

Kaia S. Rønsdal

Calling Bodies in Lived Space

Spatial Explorations on the Concept
of Calling in a Public Urban Space



Research in Contemporary Religion

Edited by

Hans-Günter Heimbrock, Stefanie Knauss, Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati,
Hans-Joachim Sander, Trygve Wyller

In co-operation with

Hanan Alexander (Haifa), Carla Danani (Macerata),
Wanda Deifelt (Decorah), Siebren Miedema (Amsterdam),
Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Nashville), Garbi Schmidt (Roskilde),
Claire Wolfteich (Boston)

Volume 27

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Kaia S. Rønsdal

Calling Bodies in Lived Space

Spatial Explorations on the Concept of Calling
in a Public Urban Space

With 14 Figures

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

This dissertation has been revised for publication.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek:
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data available online: <http://dnb.de>.

© 2018, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Theaterstraße 13, D-37073 Göttingen
All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any
means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage
and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Typesetting: 3w+p, Rimpär
Printed and bound: Hubert & Co. BuchPartner, Göttingen
Printed in the EU

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISSN 2197-1145
ISBN 978-3-647-57091-4

Acknowledgements

This book is a somewhat expanded and elaborated edition of my doctoral dissertation. I am immensely grateful for being given the chance to revise and work through the project once again, and to hopefully enhance its quality. I am humbled and thankful toward Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, and the editorial board of the RCR series for reading my work so thoroughly and for finding it a valuable contribution to the series.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank present and former colleagues at the University of Oslo, and at the Faculty of Theology, as well as colleagues in the HEROS (Heterotopic Hospitality. Spaces of Others) network, and NORDHOST (Nordic hospitalities in a context of migration and refugee crisis) network.

Finally, I would like to take this time to express my respect and esteem to the people living their lives in the streets, in marginalised spaces and on the margins of society. The circumstances for these lives are cold and hard, literally, and obviously extremely strenuous and complicated. Any person encountered in these conditions should be met with the same esteem, dignity, and respect as any other human being.

Contents

Introduction	9
The Calling	18
Two Contemporary Contributions on Calling	21
Encounter Calling	21
‘Eye Calling’	25
Summary	30
Space and Calling	32
Taking the Spatial Turn	33
Why Space and Calling?	34
A Short Introduction to Theory	36
Methodological Contemplations	41
Fieldwork Reflections	41
Reflections Going into the Field	43
Coming in from the Cold	51
Struggles with the Material	53
Rhythms of the Field	61
Impressionist Tales of Affection	65
Ethical Considerations	73
Intermission	77
An Illustration of Space	79
Life at Jernbanetorget	80
The Open Drug Scene of Oslo	87
Sentrumsarbeidet – 2012–2015	90
Excursus	91
Theories on Space	93
Spatial Theory	94
Foucault’s Topology	95
Lefebvre’s Spatialities	102
Intermission	112
Jernbanetorget – Reinterpreted?	114
Reading <i>the Intersection</i> with Lefebvre	118
Immersion into the Lived	121

The Researcher-Body's Impact	125
<i>Whose Lived Space Is It?</i>	129
Bodies in Calling	133
Recapitulation	143
Reinterpreting the Calling	145
Embodied Spatial Calling	155
Collecting Thoughts	157
The Science of Diaconia	159
Scandinavian Creation Theology	160
Outlines of Diaconia	161
The Science of Diaconia – Walking the Walk or Talking the Talk?	163
Diaconia in the City – A Philosophical Position	168
The Rhythmanalysis of Calling	172
Concluding Thoughts	174
APPENDIX I – Photographs	180
Jernbanetorget	180
The Intersection	184
APPENDIX II – The Tales	188
Bibliography	194
Websites	201
Reports	201

Introduction

In the call that I receive, there is something that is demanded from me. The situationally embodied call precedes every moral or legal claim; the question of whether or not a claim is legitimate presupposes that it has already been received as a call. Here we reach the region *on the hither side of good and evil, right and wrong* (Waldenfels: 2011, 37)

This book introduces a concrete urban space in the centre of Oslo, Norway, characterised by visible marginality. The specific topic relates to the conceptualisation of *calling*¹ and its spatial reconfiguration.

In the following I discuss the relationships between space, calling, and observer. Spatial analysis is the driving force behind this reconfiguration of the calling through the discussion of material collected from fieldwork based on a phenomenological methodology rooted partly in spatial theory, and reading this material with contributions from spatial theory that is partly influenced by phenomenology. This direction developed over the course of working on this study and led to some surprising discoveries discussed further below.

Jernbanetorget, the square outside Oslo Central Station, is the material space in question, though with a somewhat loose and expanded framework.² This area is characterised by great social diversity: It is a place of travelling and commuting as well as a drug scene that has existed alongside the travellers for more than a decade. It is one of those places where people from all walks of life pass through; people whose vulnerability and marginality are highly visible next to people who are the very embodiments of health, with their skis strapped to their backpacks, next to businessmen in their crisp designer suits. All of them encounter each other in a small geographical area, in a space that holds information on a range of different matters. I want to address the issue of *calling* from *inside* this particular space.

My discussion follows the works of the Swedish theologian Gustaf Wingren³

1 An account of this concept, in opposition *and* relation to vocation, is given in the chapter *The Calling*.

2 The geographical space will be accounted for in the chapter *An Illustration of Space*.

3 Wingren did his main work on Luther in his dissertation *Luthers lära om kallelsen* (1942), published as *Luther on Vocation* (1957) in English, and *Luthers Lehre vom Beruf* (1952 in German). In this text, I use his later work *Credo. Den kristna tros- och livsåskådningen* (*Credo. The*

on the concept of calling, emphasising the calling as coming from the other. To be more specific, Wingren's position is that the calling comes from God – through the other – asserting that our focus be on our neighbour here on Earth, for his or her sake, rather than on Heaven, for our own sake or the sake of God. Some interpret calling as coming from within an individual, like an urge to choose a profession or action. I, however, interpret the notion of calling as something coming from without – the *exterior* – another important premise of this project. In this understanding, calling actively comes from others around us, regardless of our own professions and beliefs and those of the other, and every person has a responsibility to respond to the calling of others. Following Wingren's interpretation of Luther, non-Christians are called as well – in his interpretations they are ultimately also called by God (Wingren: 1995 [1974]). According to Wingren, everyone has this responsibility, and the only motivation should be to our fellow human being – that he or she appears to us and we take action before we even consider where the calling comes from.

This line of thought is developed through practical experience, combined with a need to grasp the social world. Years of professional experience working with substance users, the last four on the streets of Oslo, provided me with the initial ideas on this project. Although it is an interdisciplinary project, it is part of the rather new discipline, the science of diaconia,⁴ as well as systematic theology. Furthermore, the concept of calling is developed particularly within the context of Scandinavian creation theology (cf. Gregersen/Uggla/Wyller: 2017). The main lines of thought of this tradition are that the world outside the churches is not understood as “God-less. The world is God-given and imbued with a divine presence” (Gregersen/Uggla/Wyller: 2017, 15). Furthermore, that to be “called from the silent needs of the other, and the way God reaches out to all people behind the mask of the other human persons, are to be considered as two dimensions of one and the same reality” (Gregersen/Uggla/Wyller: 2017, 16). Such views provide other perspectives to diaconia than those that place greater emphasis on diaconia as something fundamentally clerical. The implications of these perspectives in this present discussion are further elaborated and related to Scandinavian creation theology in the chapter *The Science of Diaconia*.

I discuss calling (as it is interpreted here) *from* a public space, *through* spatial theory: What is it and how may it be discussed spatially from this

Christian Perception of Faith and Life). These are the recapitulations of the older Wingren on his work, and I find it relevant to use them in this context.

4 As diaconia traditionally has been a *practice* founded in church and theology, and the study of diaconia is related to such practice, the term *science of diaconia* elucidates how this discipline relates to the theology and philosophy where this practice is *founded*. It is an established term in the German *Diakoniewissenschaft*, or Norwegian *diakonivitenskap*, and is used in English in for instance the journal *Diaconia – Journal for the Study of Christian Social Practice* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht). I discuss the terminology and content of this discipline in the chapter *The Science of Diaconia*.

space? Is it something detectable among people? The goal is to challenge and contribute to traditional and contemporary notions of calling and vocation. The discussion centres around the question of *what implications spatial analysis and experiences of everyday life in a marginalised microspace have for reinterpreting and construing the concept of calling.*

Although this question is relatively clear, the concepts used to approach it are not necessarily so, nor are they particularly obvious. In order to arrive at the point where the material can be discussed, I pursue two lines of thought. One concerns the concept of calling and spatial theory and the relationship between them; the other that the ways of discovering the calling within a spatial framework leads to certain methodological reflections entailing a perspective that, to a large degree, relates just as much to the researcher as to the methods employed.

The concept of calling serves as starting point. The project revisits calling in the tradition of Luther and that found in Wingren's conceptualisation in the mid-20th century. This conceptualisation is highlighted here and is furthermore enriched and developed with more contemporary contributions (cf. Wyller: 2004; 2006; 2008; 2014; Martinsen: 2012; 2014 [2000]; Nahnfeldt: 2006; 2016). These, however, sometimes seem to be of a more principal than applicable nature, and they lack input from theoretically grounded research experience emerging from the marginal public spaces, especially where the framework is unclear and encounters are unplanned or unorganised. How much sense do these concepts of calling make in a seemingly chaotic space characterised by visible marginality? I am interested in the *common calling* that takes place in our everyday lives and spaces – as well as how this common calling enriches the discussion of founding social and diaconal practice.

When we discuss the concept of calling, it may be fruitful to use spatial concepts in order to search for, find, and understand such calling, something that has not been done before with public space as the starting point. In this context, I am concerned less with the geographical spaces we exist in and more with spaces as they form our lives. This will become clear in the chapters on methodology and theory. Although spatial concepts affect the methodology, they first and foremost form the theoretical foundation.

One theoretical premise is found in Michel Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* (Foucault: 1984). In the public realm, some spaces, through their very differences, direct criticism toward society, threatening the general discourse and challenging the ethical discourse. These are heterotopic spaces. Being in these other spaces is an expression of the power of the realm of the majority. Yet they too, hold a certain power. The heterotopias disturb us because they are out of place. When confronted by them, we are surprised, even jolted out of our rhythms: We notice the discrepancies around us. Society claims the public space in question – the area around Oslo central station – as a space for commuters, travellers, shoppers, for valuable and contributing citizens, and for welcome guests. However, all these other individuals also use

the space, but differently, doing other things than what the space was intended for. They are “out of place” in this space. In other words, this space is one that continuously challenges the general discourse, both with regard to this specific space as well as with regard to society at large. The constant confrontation with the different other makes it heterotopic in my interpretation. The concept of heterotopia is the contextual premise for the discussion at hand, as I understand this empirical space to have heterotopic qualities. How can the heterotopic provide valuable perspectives on calling?

The other spatial premise I use, for *reading* and *discussing* the material, is that of Henri Lefebvre’s *production of space*. Part of his elaborate work on this topic is his *three-levelled mode of analysis*, where spaces are analysed and understood as *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space*. These analytical levels relate to how spaces are seen and interpreted from different perspectives, such as how they are perceived, how they are conceived, and how they are lived. When spaces are analysed by this levelling, new details and perspectives are uncovered. My assertion is that even small social spaces may be interpreted through this mode of analysis, making a seemingly simple social encounter like that between police officer and a substance user a complex space where the relationships are not necessarily as they may seem. This adds to the surprise in the disorder of heterotopia. The question is whether and how the details uncovered in these social spaces relate to the calling.

I discuss the calling based on a material context, an Oslo cityscape. I obtained this material by participant observation, developing it using *phenomenology* and *rhythmanalysis*.⁵ These perspectives demand a visible and present researcher-subject, as will become clear throughout the book. In this context, the material is unorganised public space, as opposed to spaces organised specifically for marginalised groups. The methodological concepts enable a new approach to this space, and they make it possible to uncover details that are not necessarily obvious. These details in turn may contribute to new perspectives being brought into the discussion. My starting point is that a myriad of things occur in any public space at all times, and as observer I have access only to parts of this, depending on my position with regard to the space. My interest lies in observing encounters between groups and people, so my assumption is that I have to enter *into* the spaces where they occur. And because I do not ask the people about these encounters, observing them enables me only to describe *what I saw*. I assume that, by *experiencing* the spaces and the encounters *with my body and senses*, other details and new information may be discovered and developed. Perspectives from rhythm-

5 A mode of observation and analysis used by Henri Lefebvre. The starting point is that the world and the human body consist of multiple rhythms. In order to understand the world outside, rhythm analysts use their own bodies and their rhythms to make sense of it (Lefebvre: 2013 [1992]). This will be accounted for throughout the book.

analysis and methods stemming from phenomenology, such as social phenomenological approach (Wyller/Heimbrock: 2010) and lived observation (Løkken: 2009; 2012), let me immerse myself into the spaces, developing narratives from the field, where my embodied and sensory experiences become part of the material. These narratives are referred to as “tales,” based on John Van Maanen’s notions of impressionist tales (Van Maanen: 2011). The impressionist concept in this context refers to both how the tales came to be, and the speed of the field. In other words, the concept lets the researcher metaphorically paint detailed pictures of events that happened within mere seconds.

Any empirical research entails considerations of research ethics. This project involves observation, and in the chapter *Ethical Considerations* I give an account of the specific challenges and considerations with regard to ethical challenges.

In the methodological contemplations, one important premise comes from researchers who have worked thoroughly with possible means of applying phenomenology as a method of empirical research. The researchers I refer to develop their theories based on central phenomenologists, such as Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, or for more specifically empirical or practical use, like Hans-Günter Heimbrock and Trygve Wyller in professional ethics (cf. Wyller/Heimbrock: 2010), Kari Martinsen in nursing (Martinsen: 2014 [2000]; 2012; 2005), and Gunvor Løkken in toddler research (Løkken: 2009). I emphasise sensory experiences in the empirical work as well as in the analysis and discussion, so these phenomenological influences become apparent. Because the discussion on calling is *also* a theological one, the Danish theologian and philosopher Knud E. Løgstrup’s phenomenological contributions play a role (Løgstrup: 1997; Christoffersen: 2007). His thoughts run parallel to the contributions of both Martinsen and Wingren. In other words, phenomenology is more than mere inspiration: It plays a vital role.

This project ultimately poses a challenge to the science of diaconia, specifically concerning its motivations and conditions. What is scientifically interesting for the science of diaconia is that this project goes directly to the marginalised lives and spaces that traditionally have been cared for by many, including the church, but approaches them *without* reference to these caretakers. The specific practices of diaconia do not make up the topic, rather the circumstances and the everyday aspects of these lives and spaces, and what can be learned through them. How the findings of the project relate to the science of diaconia is discussed toward the end.

This discussion will show that, in order to point to and write about calling, particularly in a public space, one has to be affected by others: the caller and the called. This entails starting from the perspective of this space. The roles and positions of people and groups may not be as set as one may think in an unpredictable and unclear public space – it may not be obvious, and basically depends on approach and perspective

Clarifications

The geographical area of the fieldwork is populated by several marginalised groups, and in this context ‘people suffering from addiction’⁶ play a major role. This is obviously a very heterogeneous group, and I do not attempt to provide definitions here. The people who catch my attention are groups that spend a lot of time in the streets, people who possess certain exterior characteristics I am aware, through my professional experience, of indicating addiction and participation in activities related to the buying and selling of illegal substances. I walk a fine line attributing such qualities to people, and in that manner drawing up certain dichotomies that ultimately put me in danger of appearing to make someone inferior. This is not my intention, and I must emphasise that the book is not *about* these people, or indeed *about* any others, in particular. Rather, it is about people as such – bodies, really – encountered in public spaces. Street people,⁷ and those people struggling with addiction among them, have long been the subjects (and objects) of care work and diaconia, and this area has a history of being a place for their gathering. This precipitates the clustering of organisations aiding them. It is a challenge to point to a group of people who have already been placed into so many categories, most with negative connotations, while attempting to not fall into the same trap. ‘Name-calling’ fares poorly when one is aiming to avoid categorising ‘us and them.’ All names define and thus limit how a person is perceived. There are plenty of discussions within social care as to what to call people who, for instance, use social services – “clients,” “guests,” “addicts”? When I discuss people in public spaces, they are not really anything other than just people, bodies. At least until we have more information. Bodies are given certain properties by visible exterior traits, such as clothing. When observing strangers, we identify them from such exterior traits, for example, substance users and police officers.

In the confrontation with another body, there is an embodied reaction to this body, even before one begins to think about who this person is (Martinsen: 2014 [2000], 19–23). Some theorists (cf. Waldenfels: 2007; 2011; Martinsen: 2014 [2000]; Wyller/Heimbrock: 2010) call this embodied reaction *prereflexivity*, meaning something that occurs before conscious consideration, and it is crucial to this discussion. These contributors moved the prereflexive motive into the ethical discourse, because their standpoint is that being in the world is in itself ethically and morally significant. I endorse this position. I

6 The term is placed in quotes to emphasise the challenges with labelling. For example, who decides who ‘suffers’ or ‘struggles’? I do not go into that discussion here, nor into the definitions of addiction, whether from illness or social problem, or both, etc.

7 A term used for people who spend their daily life in the streets, having them as their main social arena, workplace, home, etc. Following Nafstad, these areas (and specific groups) offer identity, self-respect, competence, and knowledge as well as income strategies (Nafstad: 2012).

assume that bodies are aware of and respond to other bodies, even when there is no suffering. Because my body and my senses are my primary tools in the field, more information is available than the simple exterior traits. Thus, I must be aware of the bodies there, not just as persons belonging to the drug scene or to the police. Still, encounters may occur between people in the tales that may play out as they do for the simple reason that these people define each other based on certain traits and qualities. And because *I do see* some people who do hold certain traits and qualities, a term is needed. I will refer to people struggling with addiction, as ‘substance users.’

Sticking with the thematic of the body, there are groups in the tales that play the role of *otherbodies*. This notion implies that the vulnerable groups are often identified by features of their bodies, but in the calling and in the encounter, in the prereflexive, it is not as obvious who these vulnerable bodies are. The notion of otherbody is clarified throughout the book.

A paramount notion in this context is that of *being affected*. This aspect plays an important role in the tales as well as in their analysis and interpretation. What does being affected mean in relation to calling? Why is it important what researchers sense with their bodies in the empirical spaces? What is the value of this embodied experience? The important premise in relation to being affected is the body. This has to do with the understanding of what “being affected” means. In Norwegian, the word for “being affected” is *berørt*, which literally means “touched.” In my understanding, the English words “moved” or “touched” relate to emotions, while here I want to emphasise that I understand being moved or touched as a *physical* experience. Martinsen writes of the Good Samaritan that he felt pain in the intestines, and what he felt is the most physical, embodied expression. It means that he saw something and was affected *in his entire body*. The pain of the other impacted him, without any distance (Martinsen: 2014 [2000], 19). When I write about being affected, this is what I mean – seeing, sensing, physically feeling with the entire body, consciously using it as tool. This is rooted in the emphasis on the body and being bodies in a common lifeworld – that is something common to us all regardless of our religious position. It also relates to the discussion on the universal as an ethical question (cf. Wyller/Heimbrock: 2010).

Throughout the book I refer to texts and books written in Scandinavian languages as well as German. Longer quotes of particular importance are reproduced in the original language in a footnote. Otherwise, the translations in the text are mine and refer to the pages in the original works.

Structure

The phenomenological and spatial perspectives can be traced throughout the text. The combination of the concepts of space and calling, and furthermore the emphasis on the researcher-subject, may be both unusual and unexpected.

Thus, the task of bringing it all together comprehensively leads to the logics of the rationale of the composition. Initially, the two lines of thought introduced above are kept separate – by introducing all the necessary tools needed to bring them together in the analysis and discussion.

The structure is as follows: Nine chapters follow this *Introduction*, which prepares the reader for the context and the discussion at hand. A couple of tales are introduced along the way, to serve as examples and to familiarise the reader with the field as new concepts are introduced. There, the character ‘#’ appears several times. This symbolises the start of a new track on the recording device. This is part of the ‘everything’ included, showing how much and how little I saw at any given time.

Directly following the Introduction, Chapter 1, *The Calling*, gives an account of the concept of calling, outlining the Wingren perspective as well as the contemporary contributions that comprise the main discussion. Chapter 2, *Space and Calling*, connects the calling to spatial theory. The chapter explains the so-called spatial turn and how society is challenged in public space. A very short outline of the main spatial contributions is also given, the goal being to introduce some perspectives that are central to the understanding of the field before delving into it. Chapter 3, *Methodological Contemplations*, contains the narrative of the fieldwork, including methodological considerations before and during the fieldwork, followed by methodological contemplations made afterwards that became central to the analysis. Chapter 4, *An Illustration of Space*, introduces the areas around the Oslo Central Station in detail, to aid the unfamiliar reader. This is essential also to the idea of spatial thinking. A short tale is presented after the geographical space where it took place is described, in order for the reader to have an impression of the seemingly chaotic life there and the framework and geographical circumstances of this life. This chapter also includes a short history of the open drug scene in urban Oslo and the key geographical background thereof, which is crucial for understanding the space and consequently its geography and socialities. Before the field and its tales are analysed and discussed, Chapter 5, *Theories on Space*, gives an elaborate account for the theoretical foundation. In the Lefebvrian reading that follows in Chapter 6, *Jernbanetorget – Reinterpreted?*, the empirical area and its different lifeworlds are analysed spatially. This chapter elaborates on the shared spaces of the bodies in the tales, the role of the researcher-subject, and whether signs of calling manifest themselves in the tales and what they look like. Chapter 7, *Reinterpreting the Calling*, discusses the concept of calling with the help of a few more tales, using details uncovered in the analysis and challenging concepts of calling introduced earlier. Through this discussion the concept of calling is eventually reinterpreted, pointing to what it comes to be granted the premises of spatial analysis and emphasising the significance of a participating body. The prerequisite for this interpretation of the calling is also a reading of the field and its tales using Lefebvre. The spatial

reconfiguration of the calling has implications for the science of diaconia that will be elaborated on in Chapter 8, *The Science of Diaconia*. The chapter introduces the reader to the perspectives of Scandinavian creation theology as premise for this particular understanding of diaconia. This is not a provincial perspective but rather an understanding that implies that the specific everyday life discussed here also belongs as a foundational space within this science. The aim is to point to the implications the conclusions of this present discussion may have for the science of diaconia. In the final chapter, Chapter 9, *The Rhythmanalysis of Calling*, I highlight the findings, before pointing to some implications and outlooks, concluding the discussion.

The Calling

[...], announces a learning *through* suffering, yet not a learning *of* suffering (Waldenfels: 2011, 26 (my emphasis)).

The premise for this book is an understanding of calling stemming from Scandinavian creation theology (cf. Gregersen/Uggla/Wyller: 2017; Wingren: 1995; Løgstrup: 2000, see also the subchapter *Scandinavian Creation Theology*), as a specific understanding where “Our relationship with God is not something that starts when we enter Church or a presumed religious territory, but always a reality given in and with life itself” (Gregersen/Uggla/Wyller: 2017, 23). I specifically turn to the Swedish theologian G. Wingren’s works on Martin Luther and his depiction of calling as a point of departure for this account.

Vocation means that those who are closest at hand, family and fellow-workers, are given by God: it is one’s neighbour whom one is to love. Therein vocation points toward a world which is not the same for all people. The same course does not fit all circumstances. Each of the social factors arising through the vocational actions of different people has its own character; and the life of society in this way develops in rich variety. As for external relations on earth Luther personally certainly found pleasure in the many. [...] Each is to do his own work, without eyeing others or trying to copy them (Wingren: 2004, 172).

The following outline is based on Wingren and his reception of Luther’s conception of calling, placing it in the world (as opposed to Heaven) (Wingren: 1995 [1974]; 2004). This is the concept I want to develop.

Because the concept as it appears in this context ultimately builds on Luther, some initial references to language are in place. This English text refers to texts in all the Scandinavian languages as well as Luther’s Latin and German, so some language clarifications are appropriate.

In Wingren’s interpretations of Luther, *vocātiō* is placed in everyday life, where every individual is part of the service of neighbourly love (cf. Nahnfeldt: 2016, 18 f). “Calling” in German refers to *vocātiō* as *Beruf*, which literally translates “called to.” In modern German, the word *Beruf* refers to one’s profession, appointment as well as religious calling. English translations of Luther render *vocātiō* often as *vocation*, which means both being called to specific tasks or occupations by God and “one’s ordinary occupation, business, or profession.”¹ However, in English, one can also use the word *calling*, which largely refers to a divine calling – or at least a moral impulse

1 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/224289?redirectedFrom=vocation#eid>, retrieved 18 Sept. 2015.

about doing what is right.² It is my understanding that, when in English one speaks of calling, it is usually something beyond one's profession or trade.

In the Scandinavian languages, the words *kall/kallelse* are usually tied to religious motivations or a motivation for a specific profession or life choices. Here, the words for trade or professions are not related to the religious term. I use "calling" to set it apart from professions and trades. In the following I give an account for the perspectives that comprise my interpretation of the content of this term.

In her contemplations on the meaning of calling for nurses, Kari Martinsen refers to the concept as it appears for many in opposition to professionalism and the emancipation of women (Martinsen: 2014 [2000]; Nahnsfeldt: 2006; 2016). Modern nursing developed in a specifically religious and ecclesiastical context, with a specific vow containing a commitment to God; nursing was thus seen as a specifically religious calling (Malchau:1998, 37; Nissen: 2000 [1877]; Martinsen: 2014 [2000]; Nahnsfeldt: 2006; 2016). According to Martinsen, throughout nursing history there have been many differences in views on the nature of calling. The dispute lies at the intersection between action and attitude, in the social ethics involved in calling, in calling as aiding another, and in calling as duty and humility (Martinsen: 2014 [2000], 87). Furthermore, she explains that calling today seems to be associated with many words that seem opposed to being professional, such as self-sacrifice, self-denial, humility, and obedience. Calling is often put in opposition to paid work. Today, it is a stance professional nursing wants to distance itself from. But there are also tendencies to revive the positive elements contained in the old notion of calling (2014 [2000], 87). I refer to nursing in this context, as it has its basis in, and is historically so closely tied to, diaconia.

With reference to Luther, Wingren broadens the concept and makes it relevant regardless of creed. However, Wingren wrote in another era, and the concept needs to be upgraded to the 21st century with more practical foundations to add specific value to how we relate to marginality, both as individuals and society. Wingren's work is based on theoretical examples, with a specific and clear neighbour. This is useful for discussing and building principles, but in real-life practices it would appear to be inadequate. The 'I' and 'the neighbour' tend to simplify the concept, which I think is more complex in lived spaces. Although I principally agree with Wingren, I supplement and challenge his concepts from the perspective of everyday life. Some writers (cf. Wyller: 2004; 2006; 2008; 2014; Martinsen: 2012; 2014 [2000]; Nahnsfeldt: 2006; 2016; Jensen: 2003; Wyller/Heimbrock: 2010) have explored and further developed the concept of calling. Although many of them also focus on professions and professionalism from the perspective on who is [feels] called, they are nevertheless important contributions here and are elaborated on in the following section.

2 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/26439#eid10442258>, retrieved 18 Sept. 2015.

Wingren's understanding of calling is a fairly pragmatic one: Every sort of suffering is a calling, and the calling serves to alert the other human, provoking action (Wingren: 1995 [1974], 42). Based on this understanding, in this context the premise for diaconia is that every response to the needful other may be understood as a church service. Wingren points to the parable of the Good Samaritan when discussing calling. He emphasises how the Samaritan was in fact *not* Christian. Diaconia means service, and everyone, even the Samaritan, can and should step up to this service.³ It is obviously of no concern what the server believes, as long as he provides service to his neighbour. A piece of bread, according to Wingren, is life-giving to the starving individual regardless of whether it is given in aversion or in love (Wingren: 1995 [1974], 70). In life we are each other's daily bread – that is how Luther expressed the relationship with our fellow human beings (cf. Løgstrup: 2000, 25). Through labour we are given our daily bread and live together in communities (Martinsen: 2014 [2000], 95).

Our fellow human being makes her suffering visible to us; what that person needs is not contained in the Bible (Wingren: 1995 [1974], 57). Understanding and responding to suffering – recognising the vulnerability of our fellow human being – may be understood as hearing the calling. A calling is a demand life poses on me to take care of my fellow human being, a fundamentally human law of love for my neighbour (Martinsen: 2014 [2000], 87). For the respective action it is also irrelevant whether this is done by church or by non-Christian groups (Wingren: 1995 [1974], 71 f).

Wingren, in his writings on Luther, thus places the calling in the one common world. This is the view of a theologian, impressed by his time. He himself came from a family of craftsmen (Ugglå: 2010; Wingren: 1991), and his interest in the lives of people from backgrounds different than most of his fellow students and colleagues may have had an impact on his thinking. When he writes of the “other,” he may have been thinking of his own family, friends, and neighbours from his childhood and youth as well as the hardships, injustice, and challenges they encountered in their lives, controlled by the powerful people in the cities (Ugglå: 2010).

There are several works on Wingren and his interpretations on Luther (cf. Ugglå: 2010; Gregersen/Ugglå/Wyller: 2017; Jensen: 2003). In this context, I am concerned with the common calling of all and a rethinking of what this may mean, rather than any dogmatic questions. What do Wingren's concepts mean in the contemporary context? What does *common* and *all* mean in our modern diverse and heterogeneous society? Wingren rarely referred to the more practical context.

My take on the subject of calling is also based on its position in the common world. However, I doubt whether Wingren's concept is broad enough to

3 The narrative of the Good Samaritan and its meaning for professional ethics is also elaborately discussed by others, for instance, Theißen: 1990; Foss: 2004.

embrace substance users or foreign beggars, nor letting *their space* be the starting point. Wingren's concept seems to support his specific focus on the 'I' and 'the [suffering] neighbour.' In this context, I want to emphasise that who we are in the calling, whether the caller or the called, is not always obvious. This of course does not mean that Wingren's ideas do not serve us well as a kind of moral compass, but in the light of ever new challenges and 'more other' others, his contribution seems a bit inadequate and too ideological for modern everyday life. Some contributors recently added more "meat to the bone," adding valuable perspectives from more practice-oriented contexts.

Two Contemporary Contributions on Calling

[...] is the language and practice of theology concerned with the Christian church only – or is the understanding of the gospel inextricably intertwined with the life worlds and experiences of all human beings?
(Gregersen/Ugglå/Wyller: 2017, 13).

Encounter Calling

The Swedish theologian Cecilia Nahnfeldt introduces the concept of calling in a contemporary context. Continuing the line of thought from Luther and Wingren, Nahnfeldt starts by saying that the task of all humans is to give life and not to take it (Nahnfeldt: 2016). Under modern unjust and uneven life circumstances, being called to be fellow humans to each other and exchange support for what each of us needs forms the basis of all human interaction. Love of one's neighbour is thus not merely the exhibition of emotions, understanding, and empathy; rather, it constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for and an ability to relate to how we live in a world in which we are destined to walk side by side and share each other's pains and burdens as one united humanity (2016, 202).

Nahnfeldt explores the possibility of interpreting calling to include both attention to the call of our fellow human and a preparedness for action that such attention entails. She asserts that this interpretation should not be associated with positions supporting conceptions of obedience and submission. Rather, she explains and discusses calling from a theological point of view, where it is part of a life view. Rather than being a divine command to an individual, it is part of the overall picture of humankind and ethics – a way of seizing existence. Nahnfeldt asserts that the church is theologically not the only place for such calling (2016, 64). Scandinavian creation theology, and in this case Gustaf

Wingren, prepared the way for such an assertion, but Nahnfeldt takes it a step further by positioning calling as a life view. She opens the concept up to be more nuanced than simply ‘I’ and ‘the neighbour.’ This is linked to interpersonality, where one is placed in calling relations toward all human beings as well as dialogue, where someone needs me and I need someone. This implies that calling, according to the Lutheran interpretation, is about interhuman relations, not just relations to God. Calling therefore touches on the Lutheran view of man and view of society (2016, 111). Here, we also start to see the strong influences from phenomenology inherent in this tradition.

In our modern, post-Christian society, the notion of calling is still very much alive in our language, although the hegemony of the Lutheran church has been challenged (2016, 39). The notion lives in language especially in the relationship to professions. Professions associated with being called, such as teacher or nurse, influence the whole idea of what it means to be a nurse or a teacher, even when they do not concur or identify with the notion (Nahnfeldt: 2006; 2016). She explains that this shows how certain Christian notions such as calling still have strong connotations in secular society.

Nahnfeldt positions the human as a situated body, building on, among others, Simone de Beauvoir (2016, 61ff). Such a view of mankind in this perspective denotes a concrete living individual who realises herself through her interactions with the world. She goes on to state that not only are we situated bodies, we are “situations” (2016, 66). This means that the situation always contains a choice, which results in some sort of action. In the situation lies freedom, until a particular choice, and thus an action, is carried out. The action in turn is the outcome of the situation. The action manifests the body in motion from the action taken, making the human in action “situated.” The significance of the body is thus present in the process of creating new meaning (2016, 6). These perspectives on the situated body are particularly relevant in this context, and they will be part of the further development of the book.

Building on the Lutheran notion of calling, Nahnfeldt states that there is support for humanity as a value in its own, as something that characterises the meaning of life and good relations. According to this logic, and in line with what is to be discussed, calling within interhumanity provides an understanding as a request for attentiveness and attention to a fellow human in need. This makes it more than just work ethics; rather, according to Nahnfeldt, it is a holistic view and attitude toward life. We are sent out in everyday life with an ethical request: to take responsibility for other humans and meet their needs. This request challenges us to ask who to listen to and what their needs really are (2016, 69).

Nahnfeldt’s notion, which will play a central part in this context, stands in opposition to the traditional “templates” *calling to obey* and *calling to serve*, namely, *encounter calling* (2016, 186 f; 200–203).⁴ The concept is not new, as

4 Nahnfeldt uses the Swedish “Kallelse att möta,” which literally means calling to encounter or calling to meet. I use “encounter calling.”

the encounter is a premise for both Wingren and Løgstrup, but she develops it further, concretely giving it a language in relevant contemporary contexts. The notion of obedience resonates with the traditional idea of being called, thus obeying and fulfilling God's plan. The notion of service can be interpreted in two ways: The first is closely linked to obedience, interpreting service as a service to and for God. The second – and this is where Wingren's contributions belong – is the calling to service for one's fellow man. Both terms, calling as obedience and calling as service, however, include and accept perceptions of power on the part of the called. The called is clearly the active subject in these terms. Yet, still little emphasis and reflection is placed on the caller. None of them entails a view reflecting the world as democracy, with equal human rights or equality. Life is lived in asymmetrical power relations, which must be included in the reflections on the calling. The idea of attending to the needs of one's fellow human being and encountering them has a value *in itself*: the potential to break norms and to create something new (2016, 202 f).

Nahnfeldt states that encounter calling gives humans both possibilities and challenges, since it places us in the encounter and thus places us in the unexpected aspects of life. The term is suggested as one that protects people's equal values and rights to shape their lives and the society they live in (2016, 203).

In her interpretations of the calling, and I here presume that she emphasises the encounter calling, she introduces an idea of calling as meaning being prepared for disruption (2016, 198). This idea of disruption is her most important contribution in this context. Nahnfeldt explains that, in the calling, something restrains one or changes the circumstances. Furthermore, she writes that it is about letting oneself be interrupted, enduring seeing or daring to receive an opening. The right to disrupt as well as the possibility of being disrupted mean giving space for hope where life for a minute becomes more whole (2016, 198).

She writes this in the context of living in line with the Lutheran concept of calling. Based on this, I presume that in order to live in attentiveness to our fellow human beings, in a willingness to share lived life with them, we also need to be prepared for disruption, to have the circumstances of our lives changed. This sounds dramatic, but it needs not call for more than realising that, in any encounter with another human being, one changes – or one must be at least willing to change in order to understand the needs of the other. This willingness also relates to the idea of being affected that is so central to this book.

What sustain a society, Nahnfeldt states, are space, conversation, and actions that embody our good intentions toward each other. So, the calling flows through everything – all of everyday life – as a possibility of encounters. Furthermore, compassion is something that shows. The calling is not just an audible word, it is a *performative acting word* (2016, 200, my emphasis).

In encounter calling, the encounter is the starting point. The encountering

human is prepared to create something new from the encounter (2016, 187). In this preparedness to create lies the willingness for disruption, change, and affection. According to Nahnfeltdt, encounter calling implies a curiosity toward those we encounter, knowing that we do not know much about those we meet before we ask or pay attention. Nor do we know what our role in the encounter is. An encountering human is prepared to dare encountering with the one who offers help. And she dares to reach out her hand even if the risk of rejection is great (2016, 188).

Nahnfeltdt states that the calling is about how people live for the living (2016, 207). In its ultimate abstraction, it is the relationship between an existential address and the response of humans. Nahnfeltdt says that meeting another person's needs as well as one's own happens when we use the ability to take changing action, and the ability to show compassion. These abilities work together to direct one to where compassion is needed. Those are the prerequisites for taking action so that someone's needs are met (2016, 207).

The concept of encounter calling reflects that all humans shift between being in need and being the one who responds to the needs of the other, according to Nahnfeltdt. The calling to encounter is a request to be attentive and to act. To encounter is also about being ready to let life take new directions for the sake of others. To be open to the possibility that one may be shaped, influenced, and changed. This, Nahnfeltdt states, is somewhat countercultural in contemporary society, where independent choice is highly valued and the belief in the ability to control things is strong. But encounter does not mean submission. Encounter happens between humans when no one has a priority from the beginning (2016, 203). This idea is open to the sociality of the calling, in contrast to the traditional reflections on the one-way calling.

On the encounter Nahnfeltdt writes:

To encounter is not something we can choose, it also happens involuntarily. We clash. We happen to end up together, in the same place. To encounter means letting eyes see into each other, letting voices speak. To wait. To not understand. To come into conflict. To become uneasy. To stay and together attempt to give life. Not to kill. That is how I understand encounter calling (2016, 203).⁵

Here, the concept is raised to the next level, compared to Wingren. She leaves the exemplary situation of someone calling to another. In encounter calling, the relations are undetermined. Furthermore, she opens the perspective of calling as something that is not always beautiful, that the encounter is not necessarily harmonious. These aspects are also crucial to how I aim at reinterpreting the calling.

5 "Att mötas är inte något som kan väljas, det är något som också händer ofrivilligt. Vi stöter ihop. Vi råkar hamna i samma läge, på samma plats. Att mötas är att låta ögon se in i varandra, låta roster tala. Att vänta. Att inte fortså. Att komma i konflikt. Att bli urolig. Att stanna och ändå tillsammans försöka ge liv. Inte döda. Så förstår jag kallelse att mötas." My translation.

She extends it to the contemporary common world and to the encounter between people and bodies, emphasising the disruption. In encounter calling lies not only the premise for encountering the other, but the chance of being disrupted in one's everyday life by another body, being called out of one's way by *somebody* in need. Her concept of encounter calling is hence fruitful to this project.

The encounters that occur in the tales are not produced, they are not imagined; they are neither self-explanatory nor predictable. Nahnfeldt's concepts are thus more relatable to this discussion than the more ideological and principal standpoints of Wingren. However, her work does not occur *from inside* the encounters or from the spaces where the encounters take place.

'Eye Calling'

The discussion on how to reconstruct the concept of calling demands one more contribution. This goes back to the Norwegian Professor of Nursing Science Kari Martinsen, who explicitly emphasises the significance of space, and phenomenological approaches and reflection.

Whereas Cecilia Nahnfeldt discusses the concept of calling within the framework of Swedish Lutheran theology, Kari Martinsen discusses it explicitly in terms of the phenomenology and philosophy of practical nursing. In many ways the two connect, since Nahnfeldt refers to nursing and implied diaconia as well as embodied interconnectedness, whereas Martinsen leans on Løgstrup, who also writes in the Lutheran tradition. Common is their view on calling as something deeply human, humane, and social. Martinsen, besides the spatial, put greater emphasis on the body and more explicitly on compassion.⁶ In the following account, I mainly refer to her book *Øyet og kallet* [The Eye and the Calling] (2000), where calling as reflected on corresponds well with what I aim at discussing here.

At the very core of Martinsen's work lies Løgstrup's ethical demand that you never interact with another human without holding parts of that person's life in your hand (Løgstrup: 2000, 37). Building on Løgstrup, she states that trust is fundamental to the lives of all people, and that it is crucial to take care of the life that has been placed in our hands. It is an acknowledgement of the

6 In German, the word here would be *barmherzigkeit*, like the *barmhertighet* of the Scandinavian languages. Etymologically, the word means taking heart *with* the suffering. The *with* is what is found in the English word *compassion*, a better choice than, say, *mercy* or *charity*, which do not include the relational and social *with* component. The narrative of the Good Samaritan is called 'Der barmherzige Samariter' and 'Den barmhertige samaritan' respectively. The *with* is part of the emphasis in the professional ethical discourse of the narrative. See Martinsen: 2014 [2000]; Foss: 2004; Theißen: 1999.